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Three authors comment upon each other's views as expressed in previous articles on the paragraph. Francis Christensen discusses the "sentence-based" theory and compares it to other descriptions of the paragraph. A.L. Becker compares Christensen's and Paul Rodgers' views and discusses their major differences in (1) identity and variation in paragraph recognition, (2) formal markers of paragraphs, and (3) formal correspondence of sentence and paragraph structure. Paul Rodgers, who contends that Christensen's and Becker's theories are limited to certain types of paragraphs, defends his new category, "stadium of discourse," which is designed to cover all possible paragraph variations. In addition to the discussions of these three authors, two other essays are included. David Karrfalt discusses "organic" essays with structure in two dimensions and concludes that Christensen's approach accounts for only one structural dimension--the vertical. In a general discussion of the purpose of discursive prose, Josephine Miles provides a background to the discussion of Christensen, Rodgers, and Becker. (BN)

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Symposium on the Paragraph

Regular readers have no doubt followed with interest a series of articles on the paragraph which has appeared in the last three issues of the journal—one by Francis Christensen (October 1965), one by A. L. Becker (December 1966), and one by Paul Rodgers, Jr. (February 1966). After independent investigation, each of these professors has now reported some of the results of his study. We are therefore fortunate to have had not one article, but the series, because the three essays open vast possibilities for further exploration.

When Professor Rodgers' article, the last of the three, came to my desk, I decided to take the initiative to get each of these gentlemen to comment upon each other's work. What they have now produced is this symposium. In addition, I made available some of the manuscript material to Professor Josephine Miles, and she also graciously consented to write. I do not hestitate to say that I think the work reproduced here is both stimulating and important. I am indebted to these people for their interest and cooperation and for the promptness with which all of them have met an early deadline for publication.

Professor Karrfalt's article, which I add to this symposium because its point of departure is Professor Christensen's article upon the sentence and paragraph, was submitted as an unsolicited article. I hope it is only the first of those which should now be forthcoming after readers have had the opportunity to study the group. Copy for the October issue must be submitted before August 1.

One of Professor Christensen's first remarks below suggests that the ideas of these articles could make "an auspicious start for the second century of the rhetoric of the paragraph." In time, we may discover that he has sounded a note of true prophecy.

W. F. I.

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FRANCIS CHRISTENSEN

THE THREE ARTICLES on the paragraph whose authors are contributing to this symposium do not look much alike, but they are less different than they seem. In some areas they overlap and are thus complementary; in others they offer alternative solutions. The leading ideas of all three could be worked into a single article that would make an auspicious start for the second century of the rhetoric of the paragraph.

The Sentence-Based Theory

Mr. Rodgers has called my article "trail breaking" and "very promising," but because it is sentence-based he sees the long shadow of Bain reaching into the new century. He would like a clean break. Mr. Becker's theory is sentence-based too, extending to the paragraph one of the modern grammatical theories devised for analyzing and describing sentences: "The purpose of this paper is to illustrate how one such theory, tagmemics, can be extended to the description of paragraphs." But a clean break is possible without giving up the analogy between sentence and paragraph. We must not be thrown off by a semantic problem—by the number of different

ways *sentence* may figure in our analogies. I see, or seem to see, four—two old and two new.

The least plausible is Barrett Wendell's, as Mr. Rodgers quotes him: "A paragraph is to a sentence what a sentence is to a word. The principles which govern the arrangement of sentences in paragraphs, then, are identical with those that govern the arrangement of words in sentences." Without the second sentence here, the first would be unintelligible. Wendell simply carries over to his chapter on the paragraph the three *rhetorical principles* he had applied to the sentence —unity, mass, and coherence.

The common form of the analogy derived from Bain can be put thus: the topic sentence of a paragraph is to the supporting sentences what the subject of a sentence is to its predicate. "A paragraph is an expanded sentence, a number of sentences bearing on one subject." This statement of the principle by H. J. C. Grierson makes sense, but, as Mr. Rodgers has so wittily demonstrated, it is a deductive theory—possibly useful normatively, though terribly rigid; and it does not fit what turns up when paragraphs are examined inductively. Josephine Miles has tried hard to show us how to work effectively within this framework. I have analyzed some of the causes of our failure to work effectively within it.

My own analogy, though sentence-based, is different from both of these. The analogy is neither with the words of the sentence nor with the subject and predicate. It is derived from my conception of the "cumulative" sentence, and it might be put thus: the topic sentence of a paragraph is to the supporting sentences what the base clause of a cumulative sentence is to its free modifiers. When analyzed for levels of structure, either a sentence or a paragraph may prove to have the form 1 2 2 2 etc. or 1 2 3 4 etc. or any combination of these coordinate and subordinate sequences. There are sentences that can be converted into paragraphs merely by changing commas, colons, or semicolons to periods, and vice versa. There are sentences that can be converted into paragraphs by converting their added levels back to the sentences from which transformation grammar would derive them. There are paragraphs (for example, my D) in which coordinate subtopics are developed some by additions to the subtopic sentence and others by added sentences. Such interchangeability gives strong support to the analogy. It is not possible with the other two.

Some of these terms possibly require explanation—an explanation that will amount to a summary of my three articles on the rhetoric of the sentence.[1]

I have tried to suggest a new criterion for maturity in the sentence and thus to redirect our emphasis in teaching. This means, negatively, that I have argued against the subordinate (or dependent) clause and thus against the complex sentence as the type to emphasize. So-called complex sentences are required for the expression of very simple ideas. A recent experience has helped confirm this observation—listening to a five-year-old girl putting on an impromptu puppet show. Noun clauses and restrictive adjective clauses and even adverb clauses (mostly with *because* but one even with *though*) flowed with the greatest of ease. So I have contended, positively, that mature sentences begin to appear when sentence modifiers, so called, begin to appear. These include nonrestrictive (or additive) subordinate clauses of all sorts; and, more sophisticated and with less predication, noun, verb, adjective, and adverb phrases (or clusters) and, still more sophisticated, absolute constructions. Except when in the initial position,

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[1] "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence," *CCC* (October 1963); "Notes Toward a New Rhetoric: I. Sentence Openers," and "II. A Lesson from Hemingway," *College English* (October 1963).

all of these must be set off by junctures or punctuation. These sentence modifiers (or free modifiers, as it is simpler and more accurate to call them, in contrast to restrictive or limiting or bound modifiers, which are generally word modifiers) may be placed, in relation to the base clause, in the initial, medial, or final position. The article on sentence openers shows that professional writers place few except the adverbial sorts at the beginning of the sentence. On the other hand, the high frequency of the other sorts in the final position, often several levels of them, is the ground for my emphasis on the cumulative sentence as the kind we can best give our time to in teaching. Even a small advance in this direction makes a great difference in the quality of the students' writing. It begins to look mature.

The four principles I have proposed for the rhetoric of the sentence (and they are quite different from Wendell's) apply in the same way to the paragraph. These are *addition*, without which we have one-level sentences and one-sentence paragraphs; *direction of modification or movement*, what Mr. Rodgers calls horizontal movement, but a flowing and ebbing movement, not a simple linear one; *levels of generality or abstraction*, what he calls vertical movement; and relative *density of texture*. These principles were arrived at by induction; all four are descriptive. But they may be used normatively. That is, there is nothing arbitrary or unnatural about urging the student to add levels, usually of a lower order of generality, in order to produce a texture rich enough to contain and display his subject. In other words, we can use the concept of levels *generatively*—in working with both the sentence and the paragraph.

In Mr. Becker's analogy, the sentence elements that correspond to the sentences of a paragraph are "tagmemes." He defines a tagmeme as "the class of grammatical forms that function in a particular grammatical relationship." The tagmeme includes "both the functional spot or slot and the set of substitutable forms"; form and meaning go together. At first glance, this may look like Barrett Wendell's analogy. But the analogy does not require that slots equivalent to those of the sentence (subject, verb, complement, etc.) should appear in the paragraph. What is involved is only the application to the paragraph of methods of partitioning developed for analyzing and describing sentences. The slots, the paragraph-level tagmemes, must be discovered, independently of the sentence-level tagmemes, by inductive analysis of paragraphs. Mr. Becker describes two paragraph patterns, which he labels **TRI** (topic, restriction, illustration) and **PS** (problem, solution). Many variations can be produced by the operations of deletion, reordering, addition, and combination.

It seems to me that, within the narrow bounds of the sentence, tagmemic grammar is on firm ground. However complex our grammar, the slots and the slot fillers are definite and rigidly limited. We learn them when we learn to talk, and any departure from them is immediately noticeable, as in "anyone lived in a little how town." (Such departures are the subject of the essay by Samuel R. Levin in the same issue [December 1965] of *CCC* in which Mr. Becker's appears.) We do not learn paragraph patterns, either the slots or the slot fillers, in the same way. With the paragraph we are on no such firm and limited ground. I have felt this with my own much simpler procedure, with only the two alternatives of coordination and subordination. These ought, logically, to be exhaustive; but often I am not sure that I can say of a given sentence that it is one or the other or, if it seems to be neither, pronounce confidently that the paragraph has begun to drift or that a new paragraph has be-

gun or that the paragraph is in this respect a bad paragraph.

Thus it seems to me that even with deletion, reordering, addition, and combination Mr. Becker's two paragraph patterns, composed of five tagmemes, is far from adequate. A complete taxonomy of the paragraph in these terms would have to be far more elaborate. The terms seem to me, too, not to be really other than the methods, so called, of paragraph development or support or expansion or amplification. Mr. Rodgers has given a good list of the commonly recognized methods; *illustration* and *proofs* appear among them, and *restriction* could and should.[2] I suspect, too, that in Mr. Becker's account there is not really an *analogy in methods* of analysis but only a *transfer of terminology* from the sentence to the paragraph. In the second half of his article, on the other hand, Mr. Becker has made an important contribution with his analysis of four types of formal markers of paragraph tagmemes: graphic, lexical, grammatical, and phonological.[3] The first two are familiar and he does not develop the fourth, but the third is most perceptive. He says, for example, that "major changes in the grammatical roles of equivalence classes signal either new slots or new paragraphs." This is an aperçu that should be followed up. If it proves valid, it will help us to see what goes into the shaping of paragraphs. It may help us to distinguish between "well-formed" paragraphs and paragraphs whose sentences have the connection with one another of a handful of marbles in a bag, as Coleridge put it in criticizing some of the writing of his day.

[2] Although the article falls short on this score, Kenneth Pike seems to me the man in the best position to do something definitive about "methods of development"—about what the computers our minds are can produce to make good a generalization.

[3] Lawrence Ianni has been working on the lexical markers.

The Paragraph and Discourse Analysis

Mr. Becker and I approach the paragraph from the side of the sentence. Mr. Rodgers, rejecting altogether the analogy with the sentence, approaches it from the side of the discourse as a whole: "Paragraphs are not composed; they are discovered. To compose is to create; to indent is to interpret." Except for what is implied by the adverb *hopefully* in his last paragraph but one, Mr. Becker does not venture beyond the paragraph. I do venture beyond it, but not systematically, in my discussion of paragraphs E, I, J, M, and N (Item 8). Mr. Rodgers, on the other hand, does not venture *inside* the paragraph, except incidentally in his shrewd critique of the school tradition. He is not concerned with its internal but with its external relations; not with its inner but its outer weather.

The central question for him is when and why we indent. The subject-predicate sentence-based tradition, with its canons of unity, coherence, and emphasis, makes the paragraph a tight logical unit, identified, usually, by the coincidence of waves of horizontal and peaks of vertical movement. The negative aspect of Mr. Rodgers's argument is expressed well in his statement that "neither horizontal leaps nor the vertical seesaw obligates a writer to indent." The positive side is expressed in the assertion that "his decision to indent may be taken for any one (or more) of at least half a dozen different reasons." These reasons are *logical, physical, rhythmical, formal, tonal,* and other *rhetorical considerations.*

To establish the existence and the validity of these extra-logical reasons for indenting, Mr. Rodgers introduces the idea of the *stadium* as a unit other than the paragraph and not punctuated as the paragraph is. If I understand him correctly, the stadium is determined by logical considerations—that is, by the horizontal leaps and vertical seesaws. Thus he can say "All good paragraphs are

stadia"; here the two coincide (Case I). But not all stadia are paragraphs; a stadium may be divided into more than one paragraph (Case IIa), and more than one stadium may be combined into one paragraph (Case IIb). Furthermore, what is difficult to concede, any given boundary of either does not necessarily coincide with a boundary of the other; a paragraph may start or end in the midst of a stadium or a stadium may start or end in the midst of a paragraph (Case III). We can put the three cases graphically something like this, where a string of S's stands for a stadium and a string of P's for a paragraph.

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Case  I    SSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
           PPPPPPPPPPPPPPP

Case IIa   SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS  or IIb SSSS SSSSS SSSSSSS
           PPPPP PPPPPPPPPP          PPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP

Case III   SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
             PPPPP PPPPPPPP PPPPPPPP PPPPPPPPP PPPPPPP
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In the process of composition, Mr. Rodgers asserts, the stadia come first and then the writer goes back over what he has written and inserts indentions: "Paragraphs are not composed" etc. I will leave it to the reader to judge the validity of this assertion. Writing habits differ. It does not describe, any more than the traditional description, the way I write. I write by paragraphs.

In place of this concept of the stadium, I have proposed that of a *sequence of structurally related sentences.* I have used this to define the paragraph—without assuming that a paragraph always coincides with or exhausts a sequence.[4] A sequence may be punctuated as a paragraph (Case I, above), or it may be divided into several (Case IIa), as paragraph E could and, if printed in narrow columns, perhaps should. On the other hand, but this may be the normative creeping out, I would not expect to find (Case IIb) more than one sequence in a paragraph, except in a compound paragraph. (Both Mr. Becker and I mention this possibility.) Otherwise, I would expect (Case III) the boundaries of paragraphs and sequences to coincide, allowing for what I have called extrasequential transitional, introductory, and concluding sentences. The sequence of structurally related sentences, based on the principle of layers of structure, either coordinate or subordinate, is an identifiable unit—possibly the same as the stadium. Whatever one's reasons for breaking up a sequence by indention, one cannot depart often or far from the nodes indicated by the structural analysis. One simply cannot "justify an indentation before almost any sentence of sophisticated prose." Not if Mr. Rockas's prose is sophisticated and not if Mr. Rodgers's beautifully structured and punctuated prose is sophisticated.

It seems to me that Mr. Rodgers was less than happy in choosing Pater's *Style* as the field for his Armageddon with the

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[4] I omitted from my paper an analysis, as an extended sequence, of a 600-word, 25-sentence, 5-paragraph summary of a thesis. The first sentence of each of the first two paragraphs might be taken as a topic sentence, but the first was the thesis sentence of the entire summary and the other the thesis sentence of the second of its two parts. If these structural sentences had been paragraphed separately, as would be logical, what was left of each would have been a coordinate sequence without a topic sentence (like I). The five subtopics of the second part were portioned out to three paragraphs—3, 1, 1. The controlling consideration here must have been physical; the paragraphs came out about of a length.

Bain tradition. He admits that another author or another piece by the same author would have revealed "different possibilities, further precedents." It would have been more serviceable to choose a piece to show less what paragraphs *can be* than what in the second half of the twentieth century they *are likely to be.* The essay on style is mandarin prose, reminiscent of some early 17th century styles before the invention in Dryden's time of the modern forms of sentence and paragraph. A better choice might have been made from the *Renaissance,* the work which Saintsbury actually did praise for its paragraphs and which in both sentence and paragraph is about as far from the essay on style as works by the same man could be. The reader can test this assertion for himself by analyzing sentence length and sentence openers, using as I have done the five paragraphs of the conclusion of *Renaissance* as printed in Josephine Miles, *Classic Essays in English.*

Nevertheless, all teachers of composition should be grateful, as I am, for a forceful demonstration of the many considerations that may legitimately enter into the decision to indent.

Some Difficulties

In his essay on Freshman English in *The College Teaching of English* Robert Gorrell has two paragraphs on grammatical subordination and the way it is involved with subordination in logic and rhetoric. It is important, he says, but we don't know much about it. "I am not sure what it is based on, although I suspect that it is related to levels of specification. We need to find out." We do need to find out. I wish I knew more about it, because it is of central importance in analysis by layers of structure. This method of analysis seems to me sound because it is based on fundamental imperatives that control our thought in the process of addition, which I take to be basic in the process of expression. When we add, we place the added item in line with (coordination) or we embed it (subordination), placing it before, after, or within—the last only with sentences. The problem is not great with the sentence, but it is with the paragraph.

Subordination is surely related to levels of specification and it is related to "paragraph movement," which I touch on in my second paragraph and Mr. Rodgers first in his discussion of vertical movement. He prefers *analytic* and *synthetic* to the more common *deductive* and *inductive.* Under either brace of names it is a source of confusion. It is involved in our attempts to identify the peaks of the vertical movement in sequences or stadia and, from them as a reference point, in our attempts to describe the shapes paragraphs take. In our textbooks, topic sentences seem to be taken as the most general or abstract statements in the paragraph. If the first sentence is the most general or abstract, they call the paragraph deductive or analytic; if the last, they call it inductive or synthetic; if one in the middle, they say it begins as inductive and shifts to deductive; and if both the first and the last, they say that it has two topic sentences and then have some trouble describing the movement between the two poles. I tried for a long time to operate with these principles and at length abandoned them as theoretical constructs with little bearing on paragraphs or paragraphing. At this point the sentence analogy occurred to me—it was not Bain sent. Thus the topic sentence became the one succeeding sentences depend from. *Depend from* suggests the graphic scheme I use. The dependent (subordinate?) sentence is a comment of some sort, an analysis, illustration, explication—insert the whole range of methods of development. The high-level sentences that appear at the end are usually extrasequential and thus conclusions or preparation for the next paragraph. Those that appear on the way down are sometimes subtopic sentences, as in E,

and sometimes exceptions to the principle that succeeding levels are at a lower level of generality. The principle generally holds, but in a subordinate sequence (such as E, and H) we simply cannot say that each succeeding sentence is at a lower level of generality than the one it is a comment on. It seems to me that a comment on may even be a deduction from. It is subordinate in the negative sense that it is not coordinate with anything above and in the positive sense that it is a comment on or explication or whatever of the sentence or series of sentences immediately above. It must be interpreted according to our perception of such vague logical relationships and to Mr. Becker's formal criteria. But in this area we have much to learn and I expect some help.

Description and Prescription

Mr. Rodgers has said that the Bain paragraph is deductive, that "deduction has failed to yield a fully satisfactory model of the paragraph," and that "the qualities of the paragraph can no more be grasped through a normative statement than can the qualities of discourse." He has thus raised by implication the vexing problem of the relation between description and prescription. It is easier and more "in" to evade or misinterpret this problem than to face up to it. I would not have written and published the studies I have if I had not believed that composition and rhetoric are arts and as arts are necessarily prescriptive and that at this time and in this place we are sorely in need of sounder prescriptive standards. The teacher's job is not just to get the spigot turned on and watch the lovely water flow. The practical question is not description or prescription but prescription based on induction or prescription based on deduction.

The only valid source for rhetorical principles that I know of is the practice of professional (which may include some professorial) writers. But in any large-scale inductive study of what *is*, our net is likely to bring up some odd fish that we would like to throw back into the water. We are sure to find paragraphs that are mere huddles of sentences and complete pieces that are mere huddles of such paragraphs. We cannot base our teaching on such models, and so we must have some principle of selection. It is implicit in what I have said here that the principle of selection cannot be the same for words, for grammatical constructions, and for paragraphs and larger units of discourse. The greater the unit (word, sentence, paragraph) the less rigid the constraints, the greater the indeterminacy. For the paragraph we can combine my four principles and two types of sequences with Mr. Becker's four operations and four formal markers and with Mr. Rodgers's ground for indention. With these procedures and principles we can guide students into the inductive study of paragraphs and paragraphing. Beyond this, it seems to me that for what we accept as "precedents" and what we reject, we must consider what appears to be effective—as accommodating the writer's subject to the situation and the reader—and what is aesthetically satisfying—as orderly, proportioned, and architectonic.

Thus the practical need for prescription does not trouble me. What does trouble me is that some teachers see no difference between rhetorical principles arrived at inductively and principles spun out deductively, as if it were only a case of new presbyter being but old priest writ large. There really is a difference between the bed of Procrustes and the beds where our professional writers have slept.

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THE MOST DIFFICULT THING about a symposium carried on completely in writing is that there's no opportunity to protest. Participants may freely lift each other's sentences out of context, restate each other's views, and seize on a few inelegant or not entirely accurate statements as "unfortunately all too typical of this writer." I am aware of some embarrassing sentences in my own article, and there are a few ideas I have come to doubt; and I know there are many places where my whole position is open to attack because there was neither time nor space to hedge it round with defenses. Consequently I beg pardon in advance for whatever inevitable misstatements of Professor Rodgers' and Professor Christensen's view appear below, for I do not believe either of them wrong in what he writes. Each view, however, does seem to me to have important limitations.

In comparing Rodgers', Christensen's, and my own articles on paragraphs, I find that our major differences can be discussed under three headings: (1) identity and variation in paragraph recognition, (2) formal markers of paragraphs, and (3) the formal correspondence of sentence and paragraph structure.

Identity and Variation

In scientific description a theory or model (which is a hypothesis drawn from observation or by analogy with other models) never precisely corresponds with the actual phenomenon that it describes. A mathematical model of the behavior of a cold front, for instance, is not identical with an actual cold front. In the model certain features of the cold front are hypostatized, and others are ignored as irrelevant to the particular purposes for which the model is designed. For a different purpose, features formerly considered irrelevant may become relevant, and the model will either be changed or a new, more useful model will be developed. It does not make sense to ask what cold fronts *are*. Rather, the scientist asks what it is necessary to know about cold fronts in order to do x or y. Consequently, the important but difficult question we must ask of any model is what it allows us to do.

It seems to me that Rodgers is posing an insoluble problem when he seeks a theory that describes *all* paragraphs. This seems equivalent, to me, to asking what paragraphs *are*. Christensen and I, on the other hand, have more limited goals. Christensen states that "the paragraph has, or may have, a structure as definable and traceable as that of the sentence and . . . it can be analyzed in the same way." In my own article, I seek to illustrate how tagmemic theory "can be extended to the description of paragraphs"—not *The Paragraph*—and to describe "certain features of paragraph structure." Christensen states explicitly (and I wish I had, too) in his final paragraph, "I'd like to claim that the paragraph that submits to this kind of structural analysis is thereby a good paragraph and the only good paragraph. But I only claim that the structural relations I have discovered are real (they are discovered by induction), and I urge my readers to discover them for themselves." Both Christensen and I are describing some features of some paragraphs.

Rodgers, however, rejects—as "procrustean"—models of the paragraph which do not describe *all* paragraphs. In tagmemic terms, he takes exclusively a *wave* view of the paragraph; that is, he focuses entirely on actual paragraphs and sees, I believe, nearly limitless variation. Let me emphasize that there is nothing wrong in Rodgers' observations: what he says about paragraphs is true,

in the sense that by adopting his perspective we can observe what he observes. The question is, what can we do with his observations? The problem with a *wave* perspective is not that it is wrong but that it is limited, for, if one tries to account for *all* paragraphs, one can never generalize: there can be no model that explains *all actual* paragraphs any more than there can be a theory to explain *all actual* cold fronts.

What Rodgers does give us is a concept which is useful in paragraph analysis but which does not describe paragraphs—i.e., it makes no generalization. I am referring to his concept of "stadia of discourse." If I understand it correctly, a stadium of discourse is one of several patterns (logical or otherwise) in a discourse which a writer, for "any one (or more) of at least half a dozen different reasons," chooses to mark off by indentation as a paragraph. Analysis of actual paragraphs is, then, a discussion of the writer's motives for paragraphing (i.e., indenting) as he does. In Rodgers' words, "a given stadium becomes a paragraph not by virtue of its structure but because the writer elects to indent. . . ." It seems to me that Rodgers here rejects the possibility of formally describing the paragraph. Many linguists and rhetoricians agree with him.

Let me state again that from his perspective (which I have characterized as a *wave* perspective) he is, I think, perfectly consistent and comes to the only possible conclusion, that paragraphs are the units which writers, for one reason or another, choose to mark as paragraphs. That, I believe, is the only way to describe *all* paragraphs.

Christensen, on the other hand, describes an explicitly limited number of structural relations in the paragraph which seem to him especially relevant to the problem of teaching students to write *good* paragraphs; his theory is to some extent normative. He shows us that the relations he describes are real, in the sense that we can discover them in many paragraphs after he has described them; and he claims that mastery of the structural relations he describes can help students write better paragraphs. (And many friends have told me that his approach does "work" in the classroom; and they sometimes add, "better than yours.")

For his purposes, therefore, Christensen can put aside many of the exceptions and structural variations that Rodgers uses to reject various theories of the paragraph. For instance, in discussing how explicit the topic sentence is in stating the thesis of a paragraph, Christensen writes:

> Sometimes it is quite explicit; sometimes it is a mere sign pointing to the turn the new paragraph is going to take. Sometimes it is the shortest sentence of the paragraph; sometimes it is not even a grammatically complete sentence. It seems to me that these differences are irrelevant, provided only that the reader gets the signal and the writer remembers the signal he has called.

Certain variations are irrelevant to his model. Others can be explained by the larger context. What seem to be exceptions at the paragraph level are often describable patterns at a higher level.

> . . . with paragraphs such as this the topic can usually be inferred from the preceding paragraph. But sometimes the topic sentence is actually part of the preceding paragraph, arbitrarily and illogically separated. Or, as in J, the preceding paragraph *is* the topic sentence; the two paragraphs of J constitute a single sequence. . . .

In tagmemic terms, Christensen describes not limitless variation in the paragraph (*wave* perspective) but a *range of variation* explainable in terms of a larger pattern (*field* perspective). Christensen finds in actual paragraphs, then, an identity within which many var-

iations are possible, while Rodgers, attempting to describe all paragraphs, sees only variation. My own position, as I hope was clear in my article, is, in regard to this problem of paragraph identity, much closer to Christensen's than Rodgers': useful generalizations are possible in discussing paragraphs.

Formal Markers of Paragraphs

The purpose of my own work (done in collaboration with Richard E. Young and Kenneth L. Pike and sponsored, in part, by the Center for Research on Language and Language Behavior, University of Michigan) is, in part, similar to Christensen's in that we both hope to extend to paragraph description theories applied previously to sentence description—different theories, to be sure. However, both Christensen and Rodgers seem to me to be describing paragraphs primarily from the point of view of the writer, describing the writer's motives and strategies in paragraphing. It is in this way that Christensen's theory is "generative." This is not to say that either Christensen or Rodgers overlooks the reader: for instance, Christensen describes some of the things that cause difficulty in reading faulty paragraphs. My own approach, however, has been centrally concerned with *the reader's recognition* of certain linguistic units as paragraphs—with the hope that by isolating and describing the formal markers of the paragraph, one can learn better how to teach students (both native and foreign) to write paragraphs.

My approach is based on the assumptions that (1) most paragraphs are conventional units, not completely arbitrary ones; here I believe I disagree with Rodgers when he states, "a given stadium becomes a paragraph not by virtue of its structure but because the writer elects to indent . . ."; and (2) paragraphs are, to use tagmemic jargon, multi-systemic; that is, paragraphs are marked by grammatical, phonological (if read aloud,) lexical, and rhetorical (or logical) features, as well as by punctuation. Let me try to support these two assumptions.

The assumption that most paragraphs are conventional linguistic units, not rather arbitrary points of indentation, is based both on the experiences of translator-linguists (of the Summer Institute of Linguistics) working with languages other than English and on as yet unfinished experiments on paragraph recognition at the Center for Research on Language and Language Behavior.[1] We have found that, given a discourse with all paragraph indentations removed, subjects can restore them with a striking degree of agreement. In most cases the subjects paragraph the passages as the authors did, and where they disagree with the author they tend to agree with each other, suggesting that some markers of paragraphs have priority over others in paragraph recognition. Furthermore, there are many points in a sequence of sentences where none of the subjects (or authors) indicate paragraph breaks. When asked for the reasons that they marked paragraphs as they did, the subjects also usually agreed. From these tests it seems reasonable to conclude the paragraphs may be conventional rather than arbitrary units.

In discussing the results of these tests with linguists and rhetoricians, I found that many insisted that paragraphs are recognized only by semantic cues and that to discuss the grammar of paragraphs, as I had, was wrong. Consequently we devised a further experiment, the results of which surprised even

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[1] The preliminary results of these experiments are described in a report by Frank Koen, Richard E. Young, and myself, titled "The Role of Lexical and Grammatical Cues in Paragraph Recognition" in *Studies in Language and Language Behavior*, Progress Report No. 2 (Contract OE 5-14-036), Center for Research on Language and Language Behavior, University of Michigan. The report includes statistics on the early tests, a full description of our method of testing, and some sample tests.

those of us who designed it. Using the same passages that had been used in the tests described above, we replaced all "content" words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) with nonsense syllables, while leaving determiners, inflectional markers, prepositions, and conjunctions unchanged in the text. We attempted, in effect, to remove all purely lexical cues from the passages. Subjects were given these passages with the indentations removed and asked to indicate paragraph boundaries. The results of these second tests correspond almost exactly with those of the previous tests. While we still must run more tests (we have tested about fifty subjects so far), including some in which grammatical cues are deleted or altered, it now seems unquestionable to me that paragraphs are grammatical as well as semantic structures.

Our approach to the paragraph is, in part, an attempt to explain this ability to recognize certain stretches of discourse as paragraphs (and, just as important, to reject other stretches of discourse as not paragraphs). In this sense it is a reader-oriented approach. In my article in *College Composition and Communication,* I discussed some of the ways—other than indentation—in which I believe readers recognize paragraphs. In this article I focused on two conventional rhetorical patterns and their variants. I agree with Christensen that "it is almost impossible to write a paragraph without employing a combination of methods or to find paragraphs that do not," and I suggested that most actual paragraphs are variations of simple patterns. I attempted to explain variations as reorderings, additions, deletions, and combinations of simple patterns. These variations are in large part conditioned by the larger context. Christensen is right in pointing out that "methods" of paragraph development (my rhetorical patterns) may run over paragraph boundaries (there is something like enjambement in paragraphing as well as in poetry), but I don't agree with him that they are not relevant to the paragraph. It is my observation that many indentations mark off just such patterns—or more usually combinations of such patterns. Here I probably agree in part with Rodgers: what I describe as rhetorical patterns seem to be examples of his "stadia of discourse" (though I describe them structurally) and frequently correspond with paragraph boundaries.

However, identifying functional parts of a paragraph (e.g., topic sentence, restatement, example, etc.) is not the same as describing the structure of a paragraph. It is necessary also to describe the formal relations of these parts. Saying that a sentence has a subject, a verb, and (perhaps) an object does not formally explain how one recognizes x as subject, y as verb, or z as object. We must explain the competence of a writer of English to recognize x + y + z as a sentence and his competence to manipulate this pattern—to expand it, invert it, combine it with other patterns, and delete parts of it—all in conventional and systematic ways.

I do not believe that the structural relations that Christensen describes—coordination, subordination, and mixed sequence—are *sufficient* to explain the competence of readers of English to recognize paragraphs, a competence which the tests I have described above suggest is real. This is not to say that Christensen is wrong[2] or that his method is not useful in teaching paragraphing. His approach, like Rodgers' (though to a much lesser degree), is, I feel, too

[2]I must mention here that a reference to Christensen in my article, "A Tagmemic Approach to Paragraph Analysis," page 238, is not an accurate restatement of his views. I had heard but not read his article when I wrote, "he makes layers of generality central to his theory." I now see that his coordinate and subordinate relations are not *necessarily* connected with levels or layers of generality. I apologize to Professor Christensen for my reductive statement.

limited, though in Christensen's work this limitation is the result of basing his theory of the paragraph too closely on an analogy with the sentence.

Sentences and Paragraphs

The final major area of difference between Christensen, Rodgers, and me involves this question of the correspondence between sentence structure and paragraph structure. I think Rodgers is right when he criticizes Christensen (and, indirectly, Josephine Miles, and, I might add, a number of "generative" linguists) for seeing the paragraph as a "macro-sentence or meta-sentence."

Christensen sees most paragraphs as "groups of sentences related to one another by co-ordination and subordination." Parts of a paragraph, in this view, are related in the same way as parts of what he calls a "cumulative" sentence. That is, in a coordinate sequence, sentences "employ the *same* method [of development]"; in a subordinate sequence "every added sentence may, and likely will, employ a *different* method." As I understand it, a coordinate sequence of sentences means a sequence of grammatically *and* lexically *parallel* sentences, and a subordinate sequence of sentences means a sequence of lexically *or* grammatically *related* sentences which are not closely parallel. It seems to me that Christensen does not really define the subordinate relation, except to say that it is not coordinate. As far as I can see, the only *specified* relation in Christensen's approach is close parallelism.

Parallelism seems to be one of the strongest cohesive features in paragraphs. In our experiments, for instance, subjects seldom mark a paragraph break between closely parallel sentences, though it is not hard to find actual paragraphs in print with two closely parallel sentences separated by an indentation. Parallelism, however, is only one feature of paragraph structure—albeit an important one. It is the lack of specification of other important relations between sentences that limits the power of Christensen's approach, at least for the purpose which I believe important: explaining our competence to recognize certain linguistic units as paragraphs.

Christensen is interested in explaining "the relation of each upcoming sentence to what has gone before." I do not believe that sentences (or clauses) are *necessarily* relevant or important units in paragraph structure. In the remainder of my comments I would like to discuss again what I believe to be a more important factor in paragraph structure than the relationship of sentences: the domains of lexical equivalence chains.[3]

The simplest example of an equivalence chain is the relation between a pronoun and its reference, as in the sentence, "John thought he was tired." Here "John" and "he" form a lexical equivalence chain whose domain is a single sentence (or two clauses, the second embedded in the first). Unless we imagine a context larger than the sentence, the relationship is clear, and it is reinforced by the grammatical parallelism—"John" and "he" are both subjects of the two verbs, and the verb forms (past, singular) are unchanging. Now consider the following sentences: "John thought operas bored him" and "John thinks operas bored him." In these two sentences, "John" is still the only possible reference for the pronoun, unless we imagine a larger context. However, at least in the third sentence the relationship between "John" and "him" is weaker than in the first sentence, for the gram-

[3] The concept of domains of equivalence chains was developed by David Lockwood in "Pronoun Concord Domains in English: An Inquiry into Grammatical Structure Above the Sentence," a paper delivered at the summer 1965 meeting of The Linguistic Society of America in Ann Arbor. I am indebted to Mr. Lockwood and to Kenneth L. Pike for a number of suggestions on how the concept might illuminate paragraph structure.

matical function of the two members of the equivalence chain is different ("John": subject, "him": object) and the verb form has changed ("thinks": present, "bored": past).

An equivalence chain may also include two nouns (*"John* is *a doctor"*), a noun and a noun phrase ("John is *the only one"*), a noun and a clause (*"Candy* is *what I like"*), etc. And the domain of an equivalence chain may extend over more than one sentence (as in the Strachey paragraph analyzed in my article, where the equivalence chain beginning "the English Constitution" has a domain of eight sentences or the entire paragraph).

It seems very possible to me that in paragraphs there are usually dominant and subordinate equivalence chains, and that the domain of the dominant chain is the entire paragraph, while subordinate chains have domains over parts of paragraphs. A paragraph may then be seen as a series of sentences (or a single sentence) which focus by grammatical parallelism on one dominant equivalence chain. A shift in dominant equivalence chain, or even a shift in the grammatical role of a dominant equivalence chain, seems to be an important signal of paragraph closure. Such shifts can be, for instance, changes in location or time (signalled often by an adverb), shifts to a new point of view (signalled often by the verb or subject), or shifts to a new topic (signalled often by a new subject or object after a single equivalence chain has functioned as subject or object for several sentences). Note that in discussing the domains of equivalence chains sentence boundaries are not of great relevance; the grammatical roles or functions of the chains are.

It seems to me that this approach (explained in more detail in my article), which focuses on lexical chains in relation to grammatical functions (rather than on sentences), shows promise both in explaining paragraph recognition and in distinguishing various modes of discourse (i.e., narration, description, etc.)[4] And I see this approach not as a substitute for Christensen's but as an additional perspective on the paragraph; not as *the* explanation of paragraph structure, but as a further explanation of what happens in paragraphs. It is, however, still a bit too complicated to "work" smoothly in the classroom, and here we return again to the question of what one wants a model or theory to do. Let me repeat once again that I don't think either Christensen's or Rodgers' approaches wrong; I have learned a great deal about paragraphs from both of them: it's just that their approaches don't tell me everything I want to know about paragraphs—but then, neither does mine.

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[4] For an extended discussion of how some of the ideas discussed above can fit together into a broad theory of rhetoric, see Richard E. Young and Alton L. Becker, "Toward a Modern Theory of Rhetoric: A Tagmemic Contribution," *Harvard Educational Review*, XXXV (Fall, 1965), 450-468.

PAUL C. RODGERS, JR.

THE COINCIDENTAL APPEARANCE of three quite different discussions of the paragraph in the last three issues of *CCC* may or may not presage a general revival of scholarly interest in units of style "beyond the sentence." One can only hope this will prove to be the case, for paragraph rhetoric has languished unaccountably ever since the turn of the century, and public discussion of units other than the paragraph can scarcely be said to have begun.

Though superficially dissimilar, these three current articles identify many of the same problems in analysis and description, and apparently share several major conclusions. Professors Christensen and Becker have concentrated on paragraph structure, developing descriptions which strike me as having much more in common than may appear at first glance. Just how close these gentlemen really are, is for them to determine. My own remarks on analytic and synthetic ("horizontal") movement and the "vertical seesaw" describe the same phenomena, but less methodically.

It seems to me we diverge mainly in our respective notions of what a paragraph is. Christensen and Becker both seem to be working, each in his own way, within what I have loosely called the "expanded-sentence" (or "sentence-based") tradition: Christensen sees the average paragraph as a "macro-sentence or meta-sentence" (p. 144) exemplifying "the four principles proposed for the rhetoric of the sentence" (p. 145); Becker seeks to analyze paragraphs "by extending grammatical theories now used in analyzing and describing sentence structure" (p. 237). Although both men argue well, neither persuades me to believe that his analytic procedure, as formulated at present, is going to prove a great deal more effective in describing *all* paragraphs than were the efforts of McElroy, Genung, Wendell, and other nineteenth-century theorists who analogized on the basis of traditional grammar. Many paragraphs do resemble the sentence structurally, but others simply do not—unless one formulates the resemblance in terms too abstract to serve any practical purpose. Or so, at least, it seems to me.

I therefore have sought a new category (the "stadium of discourse") which is flexible enough to cover all legitimate paragraph possibilities. I have defined it in non-structural terms because structure plainly does not determine the point at which a properly written paragraph must begin or end, and thus is not a defining attribute of the paragraph.[1]

Structure does of course determine the points at which indentations *may* occur. (Good paragraphing inevitably recognizes structure.) But structure is a feature of discourse itself; and in my opinion, it is discourse, really—not the paragraph—that Christensen and Becker are talking about.

Both men at times seem to be on the verge of recognizing my point of view. For example, Professor Becker speaks of "paragraph combination" (p. 240). Two paragraphs, he says, "may be combined, especially when they are either contrastive or parallel semantically," as in the paragraph from Gibney's *Five Gentlemen of Japan,* printed at the bottom of page 239. Again, referring to the same example, he mentions "the combining of what could be two paragraphs into a single paragraph" (p. 239). This second statement is meaningful and accurate, but the first is not; for it is obviously not *paragraphs* that are combined in the sample passage. A paragraph is a paragraph, not a component of a paragraph. What we find here is a sequence of two stadia of discourse, combined and punctuated as one paragraph. Becker perceives the component unit, but has no name for it.

The need for the name, and for the concept, of such a unit does not become fully apparent until one insists upon analyzing all paragraphs, regardless of size, context, rhetorical function, and degree of resemblance to the sentence. But the lesson can be learned from this example alone: structure does not govern indentation. Rather, the indentation isolates and interprets structure. Structural pattern is a property of dis-

[1] However, it probably is a defining attribute of the stadium of discourse. Most stadia, perhaps all stadia, correspond to divisions in structure (i.e., to identifiable stages in argument).

course, and may or may not be emphasized by indentations.

Professor Christensen tells me in a recent letter that he has approached the general stadium-of-discourse idea while working with "illogical" paragraphing (pp. 154-155). This concept would probably have proved useful to him also when he dealt with "inserted," extra-sequential sentences (p. 152); with introductory, transitional, and concluding sentences and sentence-sequences (pp. 153-154); with "compound" paragraphs (p. 155), which include more than one topic sentence (level 1); and with a situation like that illustrated by the Edith Hamilton excerpt reproduced on page 153. Here the topic idea is set up in one paragraph, with its developers segregated, and consequently emphasized, in the next. Miss Hamilton's partitioning is fully acceptable, despite the fact that her second paragraph departs from the standard sentence-based formula. Christensen wisely describes the whole passage as a "single sequence," though he lacks a generic name for components of such a sequence; and when he analyzes it according to his system, he presents us with an outline, not of a paragraph, but of a stadium of discourse containing material punctuated as two paragraphs.[2]

In view of the foregoing observations, I believe all three of us can agree without difficulty that identifiable stadia of discourse do exist, that large stadia sometimes contain smaller stadia, and that individual stadia can be both smaller (as in the Becker example) and larger (as in the Christensen example) than the paragraphs with which they are in part conterminous. Can we not, then, also agree that the paragraph itself—any well composed paragraph—is such a stadium?

Whatever the answer, this is the conclusion I have reached myself. I therefore inevitably feel some uneasiness when I read such a statement as the following by Professor Christensen: "A sentence that is not coordinate with any sentence above it or subordinate to the next above it, breaks the sequence. The paragraph has begun to drift from its moorings, or the writer has unwittingly begun a new paragraph" (p. 145). One does not begin new *paragraphs* unless one indents. What the writer of such a passage does is to start a new stadium, ignoring a partition which might be, and perhaps ought to be, tagged by indentation. A similar minor objection is to Professor Becker's observation that "There seem to be two major patterns of paragraphing in expository writing" (p. 238). To me, this can only mean: "Among the various patterns of discourse that we find set off by indentations, there are two that seem to enjoy far greater popularity than others." The distinction here is not merely academic. The revised statement reminds us that pattern exists not only in paragraphs but in units that are not paragraphs. More important, it prevents the analyst from thinking of the paragraph as if it were a sort of rhetorical *Ding an sich* conceived and rendered as a unit (like the sentence) according to definite laws.

Becker's discussion illustrates the danger of proceeding in this fashion. Having identified certain structural patterns commonly found in paragraphs, he goes on to refer to paragraphs that differ structurally as if they were products of structural variation wrought by the "operations" of deletion, reordering, addition, and combination of components of the "kernel" patterns.[3] The **IRT** pattern, he says, is a **TRI** pattern "reordered by inversion"; T_1RIT_1[4] is an "expanded form" of **TRI**; a paragraph constructed on the

[2] In his comments on Paragraph E, page 150, he also recognizes subordinate stadia which could be punctuated as paragraphs.

[3] Becker (pp. 238-239) finds two major patterns in expository writing: **TRI** (topic + restriction + illustration or description) and **PS** (problem or effect + solution or cause).

[4] Presumably this should be T_1RIT_2. A misprint, possibly.

pattern PS_1TRIS_2TRI shows that "two paragraphs [i.e., two patterns] may be combined" (p. 240). Clearly we must be careful how we understand such statements. In the world of real paragraphs, a given pattern is just what it is, nothing more and nothing less. An **IRT** is an **IRT**, not a **TRI** that someone has turned around. And the pattern of a T_1RIT_1 paragraph is purely and simply T_1RIT_1; nothing has been expanded. The Gibney paragraph (pp. 239-240) quite literally possesses the complicated pattern indicated by Becker's glosses: PS_1TRIS_2TRI. So far as I can see, the metamorphosis of a paragraph pattern can be accomplished only by a rhetorician manipulating formulae in his notebook.

As a discourse is composed, the writer sets down a series of the elements denominated by Becker's T's, R's, I's, P's, and S's—all of which are stadia, or components of stadia, of discourse. Certain kinds of stadia tend to succeed each other in a certain order. A **T** is likely to be followed by an **R**, which in turn may give way to an **I**. And the writer, upon completing his **I**, may well decide to indent before proceeding to the next unit, thus isolating a **TRI** pattern between indentations. But each of the four phenomena (the **T**, the **R**, the **I**, and the indentation) normally arises separately, involving a separate decision or series of decisions, and none of the decisions occurs because the writer has to follow, or wants to follow, or even recognizes, a pattern. He does, of course, respond to certain recurring rhetorical and psychological situations in a fairly predictable way, and this accounts for the fact that certain sequences of types of stadia appear frequently. But there are as many paragraph patterns as there are paragraphs that are structurally distinct, a theoretically infinite number. And paragraph patterns are as stable as the printed page.

If one rewrites a paragraph, then naturally its pattern may change, but to abstract the pattern from the paragraph and treat it *in vacuo*, to speak as if we could take hold of a pattern and mold it, is to run a serious risk of confusing our readers and losing touch with reality ourselves. Above all, it is likely to help perpetuate the quite unfounded notion that all good paragraphs, in the final analysis, somehow possess the same structure. We avoid this confusion and risk when we attribute pattern to its proper vehicle: the discourse.

Patterns do appear and recur in discourse, quite independently of indentations, and Becker and Christensen have substantially increased our awareness of these recurrences and of the texture of discourse generally. Neither man has undertaken to describe all discourse (that is, all paragraphs), but both men's analytic systems cover perhaps a majority of the paragraphs one would encounter in the average essay. Professor Christensen's system, it seems to me, can readily be refined and extended to cover other kinds of material and to do so even more sensitively than it now does. Professor Becker's, because of the high level of abstraction at which he operates, seems to hold less immediate promise of extension, just as it is less precise in handling elements of the standard paragraph. Its terms are very broad in reference, even more so than the names of the traditional methods of paragraph "amplification," from which they appear to derive. To cite an example, Becker says that in the **R** "slot" the topic idea, which previously has been broached in the **T** slot, undergoes "restriction"; that is, it is "narrowed down or defined" (p. 238) or restated at a lower level of generality (p. 239). Here, it seems to me, he is using the same symbol (**R**) to cover three different kinds of statement. If the topic is narrowed, the idea itself is cut down; the scope of the assertion is restricted. If **R** contains a definition, then the topic is clarified, wholly or in part, and remains precisely what it was in **T**. If the idea is restated,

it is clarified, but recast in the process, and therefore changed at least slightly. The topic also may be *expanded* by a sentence located in the **R** slot. It would hardly be appropriate to classify such a statement under the heading "restriction."

The tagmemic approach offers a handy way of recording and codifying the elements of a stretch of discourse, but its terms will have to be made at least as perceptive as those we already have. I question whether we gain much by speaking of a **TRI** pattern, rather than saying, as Alexander Bain did in 1866, that "The leading form of the Expository Paragraph (and of Exposition generally) is the statement of a [principal idea], followed by such a choice of Iterations, Obverse Statements, Examples, Illustrations, Proofs, and Applications, as the case may require."[5] Too many separate and distinct entities are absorbed into **I**, **S**, and the other terms. At this level of abstraction, too little is communicated.

Professor Christensen, in his article, does not discriminate the types of components of discourse precisely. Nor do I, in mine, save in the traditional way. What fascinates me about Christensen's outlines is the way they suggest realities in prose structure that no one has yet identified or named. By avoiding traditional language and communicating through pictures, so to speak, he manages to direct our perception toward a new range of concepts.

But even Christensen, I suspect, may run into trouble with certain kinds of styles; that is, with the extremes of "pace." His method seems best adapted to styles in which the writer maintains a fairly deliberate pace, buttressing his leading ideas with lower-level supporting material developed through a more or less extended sequence of sentences. There are, however, certain condensed, elliptical, "intuitive" styles where defensible leaps in thought occur between sentences, within the paragraph, and much potential ancillary material is suppressed. Can he deal adequately with such hiatuses? At the other extreme, how about expansive styles, where ample subordinate material exists but not in the form of separated, independent predications? I simply raise the question.

I wish also that we might have tight definitions of Christensen's key concepts. Lacking definitions, I have sometimes had great difficulty distinguishing "coordinate" from "subordinate" statements, particularly at the third and fourth levels of generation. "Generate" itself seems somewhat opaque. Is this concept primarily logical or psychological? That is, when we predicate the fact of generation, are we referring to relationships among sentences or to acts of literary composition? Becker's "slot" and "filler" bother me in the same way. Slots do not fill themselves, any more than sentences literally generate succeeding sentences. It seems to me that all such words must ultimately be understood in terms of authorial impulse and strategy, and the channels in which the mind typically moves, as well as by reference to linguistic structures.

Because I have trouble understanding certain terms, I do not always know whether or not I agree with Becker and Christensen, and I dare say they have the same difficulty judging what I have written. Consider the distinction between Becker's **TRI** and **PS**, his two basic kernel patterns. In the **T** slot, he says, "the topic is stated" (p. 238); in the **P** slot, one finds "the statement of a problem or an effect which is to be explained" (p. 239). A **T** and a **P**, accordingly, are different kinds of statements and generate different kinds of paragraphs. But what is a topic statement? How does one recognize it? "Sometimes," as Christensen remarks, "it is quite explicit; sometimes it is a mere sign pointing to the turn the new para-

[5] Alexander Bain, *English Composition and Rhetoric: A Manual* (London, 1866), p. 169.

graph is going to take" (p. 146). Although Christensen cites no instance of a paragraph that opens with a question (a common form of **P**), I think he might be willing to join me in regarding an interrogative **P** *as a topic statement*, a "sign" characterizing the content of the paragraph. And similar interpretations can be provided for non-interrogative **P**'s. Viewed in this way, a **P** is just a special kind of **T**; and **PS** turns out to be a special form of **TRI**, if the definition of **I** is broadened somewhat to incorporate one or two additional types of material.

This is but an instance of the kind of tangle that results when we work with fuzzy terms. The "statement of topic" has never, to my knowledge, been defined thoroughly. Until we define it, we shall not be able to describe it to everyone's satisfaction or even to agree upon its location.

According to Professor Christensen (p. 146), topic sentences stand "almost invariably" at the beginning in the many scores of paragraphs he has analyzed, the chief exceptions being paragraphs that open with introductory or transitional sentences. Not having found any "clear-cut examples of topic sentences in the other theoretically possible positions," he concludes that all or almost all well-written paragraphs follow the analytic pattern. That is to say, they state the topic first and then develop it in succeeding sentences. Professor Becker's two basic paragraph formulae describe this same analytic movement. However, Becker's recognition (p. 240) that the components of **TRI** frequently appear in inverted order, especially at the beginnings and endings of essays, seems to contradict Christensen's findings; for the **IRT** pattern fits the definition of synthesis perfectly. My own conclusions support Becker's. It seems to me that most writers, most of the time, do proceed by analysis—using the **TRI** pattern. (Analysis is the easy, natural way of saying things; all of us adopt it instinctively.) But synthesis does occur, and certainly occurs often enough to warrant attention. In short, it would appear either that Professor Christensen has happened not to encounter examples of a type of movement that Becker and I have both identified, or that he sees structure differently from the way we do. But I rather suspect we are all working with similar materials and making similar observations. We just aren't describing what we see in the same way. At this point, a glossary of our various special terms might forestall a spate of needless argumentation in future issues of *CCC*.

Let me cite the paragraph I have just written as a case in point. This paragraph certainly will win me no blue ribbons for rhetorical excellence, but I do think it is acceptable—and typical of the practice of many writers who affect a casual style or who compose rapidly, discovering their conclusions as they go. This is the way I would outline it, using the Christensen system:

2 (*a*) According to Professor Christensen (p. 146), topic sentences stand "almost invariably" at the beginning in the many scores of paragraphs he has analyzed, the chief exceptions being paragraphs that open with introductory or transitional sentences.
2 (*b*) Not having found any "clear-cut samples of topic sentences in the other theoretically possible positions," he concludes that all or almost all well-written paragraphs follow the analytic pattern.
3 (*c*) That is to say, they state the topic first and then develop it in succeeding sentences.
2 (*d*) Professor Becker's two basic paragraph formulae describe this same analytic movement.

2 (*e*) However, Becker's recognition (p. 240) that the components of **TRI** frequently appear in inverted order, especially at the beginnings and endings of essays, seems to contradict Christensen's findings; for the **IRT** pattern fits the definition of synthesis perfectly.
2 (*f*) My own conclusions support Becker's.
3 (*g*) It seems to me that most writers, most of the time, do proceed by analysis—using the **TRI** pattern.
4 (*h*) (Analysis is the easy, natural way of saying things; all of us adopt it instinctively.)
3 (*i*) But synthesis does occur, and certainly occurs often enough to warrant attention.
1 (*j*) In short, it would appear either that Professor Christensen has happened not to encounter examples of a type of movement that Becker and I have both identified, or that he sees structure differently from the way we do.
2 (*k*) But I rather suspect we are all working with similar materials and making similar observations.
2 (*l*) We just aren't describing what we see in the same way.
3 (*m*) At this point, a glossary of our various special terms might forestall a spate of needless argumentation in future issues of *CCC*.

I offer this analysis with a good deal of trepidation. I find the last three sentences particularly difficult to classify, and I may have mishandled earlier material. But surely the tenth sentence is the topic sentence. Note that by making only minor changes I could have placed it first, producing a normal analytic sequence. I could also have placed the topic sentence second, by rendering the essence of the first nine sentences as a single compound-complex sentence. By extending the conclusion, I could have placed the topic in the center of the paragraph. By simply shoving the last three sentences into the next paragraph, I could have placed it last. Yet Professor Christensen says the topic sentence almost always comes first, and reports that he does not find instances of topics in the other theoretically possible positions.

My paragraph may be so unusual that he has never seen one like it, but it seems much more reasonable to suppose that we disagree on the meanings of terms, possibly on the meaning of "topic sentence," more probably on the meaning of "generate."

Professor Christensen discusses generation in terms of the two structural relationships he finds among sentences in sequence: coordination and subordination. Except for the topic sentence, which never is subordinate and only rarely is coordinate (see Paragraphs E and N on pages 149 and 154), all sentences are subordinate, whether or not they are also coordinate; that is, they are written as "support" for, or as a "comment" on, or a "development" of, a sentence at the next vertical level above (p. 145). The topic sentence is "the sentence whose assertion is supported or whose meaning is explicated or whose parts are detailed by the sentences added to it" (p. 146); all sentences in a normal paragraph ultimately support, and are subordinate to, the topic sentence. The topic generates the lower-level material; the lower material, directly or indirectly, supports and is subordinate to the topic, and to higher sentences subordinate to the topic. Wherever there is generation, there is subordination in consequence. Coordinate sentences ("siblings" . . . "children of the same mother," p. 147) are products of multiple generative impulses originating in the same higher-level sentence: all normal coordination is also subordination. Generation and subordination thus go hand in hand.

Reverting to the paragraph outlined

above, I find that sentences *a* through *i*, if viewed as components of a logical structure, support and are subordinate to the topic sentence (*j*). However, several of these sentences (that is, the thoughts they express) caused me to write—and therefore, in a *psychological* sense, generated—further sentences parallel to them. Having noted Professor Christensen's conclusion regarding the placement of the topic sentence, in *a–b* (*–c*), I was reminded of Professor Becker's contrary findings (*d–e*). Then, realizing that my own evidence might help the reader evaluate the two conflicting claims, I completed the canvass of our group in *f–i*. Only then did the thought phrased in *j* become appropriate or even thinkable.[6] The lower-level material in the sequence *a–i* was not generated by the topic sentence in a psychological sense, although it is subordinate to it logically. Psychologically, the lower-level material generated the topic.

Since logical and psychological generation do not proceed together in *a–j*, as they do in analytic sequences, I could not express both sets of relationships in the same outline. I chose to ignore the psychological and to follow the logical pattern, thereby more closely assimilating my outline to Christensen's samples. But clearly I was facing a problem that Christensen had not shown me how to deal with.[7]

The concluding sequence (*k–m*) proved even more bothersome, and again I was uncertain as to how Christensen would handle it. Psychologically, these sentences were generated more or less seriatim, *k* and *l* being suggested by *j*, and *m* being suggested by the combination *k–l*. But can they be said to support or comment on or develop or explicate or detail the parts of the thought phrased in *j*? Plainly they do not support or explicate it, nor do they detail its parts. However, if an implied denial of an implication of a proposition is a "comment" on the proposition, then *k* is subordinate to *j*. And if an explanation is a "development," then *l* is subordinate to the combination *j–k*. It was on this very tentative basis that I made *k* and *l* parallel, both subordinate to *j*. I could not show the full relationship on the outline. Sentence *m*, which seems to be logically subordinate to the combination *k–l* because it states what might be regarded as an implication of this sequence and thus perhaps "develops" it, was placed subordinate to *l*. Again, I could not show the complete relationship.

I am not contented with this analysis, and I think Professor Christensen will be even less so. (What would Professor Becker say? Is the pattern ITI?) My discontent becomes acute when I consider what happens if I add the following sentence to the original paragraph: "Like most human disagreements, ours probably originates in a silent community of experience; only the commentaries conflict." Placed in position at the bottom of the outline, this sentence appears to be a topic sentence (level 1), drawing its support from *k–m*, with *m* receding in importance and looking rather like a parenthetical or extrasequential sentence. The paragraph becomes "compound"; both *j* and the newly added *n* are topic sentences. How, then should we now think of *k–m*? Does this sequence somehow support *j* as well as *n*? If it supports *n* alone in the revised paragraph, then can we say, as I did above in my outline,

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[6] The actual thought process was doubtless a good deal more compressed than this reconstruction indicates. I must have seen *j* on the horizon well before I wrote *i*.

[7] Professor Christensen remarks (p. 147) that there are six generations in Paragraph B, which contains six sentences. This would imply that his concept of generation is logical, as the topic sentence itself can not be said to be "generated" in the same *psychological* sense as its supporting sentences. In the last paragraph on page 148, however, he seems to equate generation with the "addition" of supporting sentences. This suggests the psychological idea, as also do the comments on coordination ("children of the same mother," p. 147).

that it supports *j* in the unrevised paragraph?

My own feeling is that *k–m* flows psychologically from *j*, whereas logically it supports *n* in the revised paragraph, and *stands alone* in the unrevised paragraph. The sequence *k–m* is a minor stadium generated psychologically by *j*. When we add *n*, rounding out this second stadium, it becomes clear that the movement of thought within the sequence is synthetic, not analytic; and that this material, although initially provoked by *j*, does not support *j logically* in either version of the paragraph.

In sum, neither *a–j* nor *k–m*, nor the full sequence *a–m*, seems to fit Professor Christensen's conception of normal movement, and the overall pattern (**I** + **T** + ?) is unlike either of the kernel patterns identified by Professor Becker. In order to analyze this paragraph to my own satisfaction, I must set aside sentence-based presuppositions and recognize two distinct synthetic units, only one of which culminates in a topic sentence. And to discuss my findings with ease and accuracy, I have to use some such neologism as "stadium of discourse"—another bit of jargon just as much in need of definition as "topic sentence" and "generate."

✦

Much, then, has been accomplished by the three recent forays into paragraph rhetoric, but we have raised many more problems than we have settled.

The new terminology must be clarified. Structural analysis must be extended throughout the full range of discourse. The rise and fall of the level of generality, which all of us refer to, must be dealt with explicitly. The rhetorical significance of the paragraph indentation must be thoroughly investigated by inductive explanation of the practice of many writers. And when all this has been done, and the conclusions have been codified and translated into the language of Christensen's outlines, we no doubt will face another tier of questions, and another, and yet another. For the modest, unsung Muse of Prose, though only a minor goddess, wields a complicated magic.

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A SIMPLE VIEW OF PURPOSE in discursive prose may provide background for what Mr. Christensen, Mr. Becker, and Mr. Rodgers have been saying about paragraphs. The simple view is that writing endeavors to provide situations for its statements; it wants to locate its predication in time, place, manner, consequence; it wants to provide a *where, when, how, why,* for its *who does what*. In speaking, much of this work can be done by gesture. In writing, it needs to be spelled out, perhaps as minimally as by an *-s-z* signal of person in time: *he plays*; or by the demonstrative contrast between *this* and *that*, or by the specific-general contrast of *the–a*, or by the character-manner contrast of *ish–ly;* perhaps, on the other hand, as maximally as by a two-volume novel's contrasting episodes of *boy meets girl*: I. By accident, in the jungle; II. On purpose, three years later, in the desert.

Between these extremes of syllable and volume come sentence and paragraph. The name of the latter emphasizes its written nature. As spoken, it seems as anomaly, because of its relative lack of mnemonic device for so great a length; yet it does flourish in oratory as written

to be spoken, and its writer may well be cognizant, therefore, of listening ear as well as reading eye. What is its relation to the sentence? A paragraph is a group of sentences; but what sort of group? Any sort of group. How then a group? By reason of, as we have already suggested, such pertinent concerns as the *when, where, how, why* of assertion. Just as qualifiers, phrases, and clauses are outriders upon a sentence-nucleus, so qualifying, phrasal, and clausal paragraphs are outriders upon nucleus-paragraphs.

The sentence may read: "Carefully he drove to town—," or, more generally, "These plans need to be followed carefully." The paragraph, as Mr. Christensen has shown, may begin with a number of sentences conveying in greater extension the idea of "carefully," and then a number of sentences conveying the action of driving to town or following plans. Even more fully, as the one sentence is derivable from two, so the one paragraph may be derivable from two, the first on care, the second on driving. So there may even be various sorts of care, with a paragraph to each; and various stages of driving, or following, each with its own paragraph.

In other words, paragraphs, like words and like sentences, may try to be portmanteau, carrying the event and the fullness of its situation all in one unit; or may try to work step by step, devoting one or more wholes to each of the concerns of *when* and *where, why* and *how*.

To this degree Barrett Wendell's formula and Professor Christensen's use of it seem to me to be justified; a paragraph may be to a sentence what a sentence may be to a word, in that each may share, and may focus on the same ways of sharing, the basic purposes of locating assertion in situation, and may thus arrive at similar sorts of groupings. So any sort of white space, between words and sentences as between paragraphs, may serve to say "rest for a moment," as Mr. Rodgers suggests, by a sense of group-making which is either formal or referential.

Mr. Rodgers' analysis of the paragraphs in Pater's "Style" shows their great variety in length, from one to eighteen sentences, from twenty-four to seven hundred and ninety three words, concomitant with their great variety in function. Paragraphs 1 and 2 establish a necessary basis for a more general 3, much as Mr. Christensen has shown in other models; they are, in effect, adverbial beginnings. The logical unit PI-3 is broken into three parts much as one logical statement could be broken into three by emphasizing qualificatory aspects in separate preparatory sentences. So also, sentences like paragraphs can join to share ideas that need blending.

Mr. Rodgers' conclusion that "To insist that logic establish every indentation is to ignore several of the prime resources of good prose . . ." perhaps overstresses logic as the art of syllogism. Logic takes into account conjunction, disjunction, alternatives, implication, concession and all such relating of possibilities; that such a relation as "He was careful; he drove to town" is not in focus for logic does not mean that it is illogical. The qualifying outriders of assertion, in that they are assumed rather than asserted, do not challenge logic, but work within its realm. *Mortal* Socrates has other fish to fry than the assertion of his mortality; therefore a well turned paragraph or two on his mortal qualities may well precede that paragraph which asserts some other activity of his.

One reason I think it important to recognize the nucleus-plus-adjuncts quality of paragraph, as of sentence, is that the explicit connective terminology of sentences plays across and beyond the mere sentence unit. The "when-when-when-then" structure of a Shakespearean sonnet is equally suited to paragraph or whole essay as to single sentence. The traditional proportion of connectives to verbs in English prose is about two to

one, which means either that a predication is supported by two prepositional phrases, "He drives to town with care"; or that independent as well as dependent verbs are linked by explicit connectives. That is, even the independent predicate-nucleus can be seen to be introduced by capitalized *Nevertheless, However, But, Then, Or, On the other hand, Therefore.* The indentations of paragraphs may stand for semicolons as well as periods, semi-stops as well as full stops.

To consider purpose in writing is to remember that not all purpose is to assert-question-exclaim; much is to locate in context, to qualify by assumption, in word, in phrase, in clause, in sentence—and in paragraph.

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THE TITLE OF THIS PAPER might be "A Generative Rhetoric of the Organic Paragraph and Essay." The point of departure is the Generative Rhetoric presented by Francis Christensen in his two papers "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence" (*CCC*, October 1963) and "A Generative Rhetoric of the Paragraph" (*CCC*, October 1965). Christensen's Generative Rhetoric begins with a statement of the principle of addition, and in his paper on the sentence he quotes John Erskine's remark: "The modifier is the essential part of any sentence." He extends the principle of addition to the paragraph, thinking of the topic sentence "as parallel to the base clause of a sentence and the supporting sentences as parallel to the added single-word modifiers and clusters and subordinate and relative clauses." The structure of *most* paragraphs includes structures of subordination and of coordination, with each sentence either subordinate to or coordinate with a preceding sentence.

A difficulty implied in "A Generative Rhetoric of the Paragraph" concerns added structures that are neither coordinate with any sentence above nor subordinate to the next sentence above the added sentence. A sentence that seems to break the sequence of coordinate, subordinate structures in this way may also be at a level of generality higher than that of the sentence that has been added to—or, for that matter, than that of any other sentence earlier in the sequence. This difficulty probably results from the assumption that "The modifier is the essential part of any sentence." This assumption may not always hold true. In a sentence, parts other than the modifier can certainly be as important as or more important than the modifier, or—to state this in another way—structures other than those of modifications are essential to the total sentence structure. Sentences have four possible types of structure: structures of modification, structures of coordination, structures of predication, and structures of complementation. These four types might be grouped under two headings: *vertical structures* (modification and coordination) and *horizontal structures* (predication and complementation), these being terms with seemingly the most accurate connotations. It can be observed, then, that Christensen's Generative Rhetoric describes only *vertical structures.* A rhetoric that considers both *vertical* and *horizontal structures* might escape the difficulty encountered by considering only the former.

In most cases, a sentence has horizontal structure whether or not it has vertical structure. A sentence need not have vertical structure; for example, "The system, we see, does work"—Joseph Wood Krutch. Or, a sentence may have structures of coordination in addition to horizontal structure but yet have no structures of modification. Or, a sentence may have a minimum of modification structures; the following sentence has only one modifier, a prepositional phrase, but still has a fairly dense texture: "It [my purpose] is to say that one passed into the other, that one became and was the other"—Wallace Stevens.

Similarly, a paragraph need not have vertical structure. The following paragraph, for example, has only horizontal structure:

> 1 On this earth, perhaps throughout the whole universe, the most fundamental of all antinomies, the most crucial of all struggles is that between life and death—or, as it might be more true to say, between life and not life.
> /1 And, who capable of realizing this fact, or of seeing himself as part of the Great Rebellion of the animate against the inanimate, can fail to find comfort in the fact that it is not alone in him that the one protagonist is embodied; perhaps even that the ultimate issues do not depend upon his success or his failure alone?
> /2 Consider again the November trees which lift their arms to say that they have only temporarily yielded; that next spring they will again assert their determination to live. Those trees, like the frog now sleeping under the mud, are on our side.
> —Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Twelve Seasons* (Apollo Editions), p. 126.[1]

The second sentence in this paragraph does add to the first, but it is not subordinate to the first. The structural relation between the second and first sentences is not analogous to that between a modifier and its head; the structural relation here parallels that between predicate and subject. In this relation, there is addition, but the addition is one of completion rather than subordination. The fourth sentence is included with the third because the two function as a unit in this paragraph.

Just as a sentence may have structure of coordination in addition to horizontal structure but yet have no structure of modification, so may a paragraph:

> 1 There is a universal poetry that is reflected in everything.
> 1 This remark approaches the idea of Baudelaire that there exists an unascertained and fundamental aesthetic, or order, of which poetry and painting are manifestations, but of which, for that matter, sculpture or music or any other aesthetic realization would equally be a manifestation.
> /1 Generalizations as expansive as these: that there is a universal poetry that is reflected in everything or that there may be a fundamental aesthetic of which poetry and painting are related but dissimilar manifestations, are speculative.
> /2 One is better satisfied by particulars [than by these speculative generalizations].
> —Wallace Stevens, *The Necessary Angel* (Vintage), p. 160.

No claim is made here concerning the frequency of appearance of such horizontally structured paragraphs. Probably more common than the above types of

[1] The "outdentation" used here (rather than the conventional indentation) is meant to indicate that the structural relation between the "outdented" sentence and the preceding sentence is horizontal rather than vertical. The system of numbering used here, in which the second sentence is slash-1 rather than just plain 2, is meant to indicate that the second sentence in the paragraph is added in the first structural level in the horizontal dimension. The slashes are perhaps unnecessary, but they are intended to emphasize the idea that the horizontal dimension is, as it were, perpendicular to the vertical dimension. In terms of the paragraph-sentence analogy, the paragraph here is analogous to a sentence in which the subject itself is a complete noun clause.

paragraph is the following type, which shows, in addition to horizontal structure, vertical structure of both kinds—coordinate and subordinate.

1 There is an amazement proper to the experience of all great art, but the special amazement which *War and Peace* revives in me while I am reading it is like that of a child.
2 The child does not expect the unexpected; that would already be a preparation against it.
2 He does not for an instant doubt that a certain event had to happen; such doubt obscures.
3 He may even have been told beforehand that it was going to happen; such foreknowledge is as little a part of him as is a label in his cap.
3 He is able to look at the thing itself.
3 The event reaches him radiant with magical causes but not yet trapped in sufficient cause.
/1 Tolstoy does not, as many do, achieve this freshness by transforming the reader into a never-never land.
/1 On the contrary, his fictional mode is realistic: the people in his novel appear and behave like possible people in the world we daily live in.
/2 His achievement is the greater because he uses the mode of realism, for realism offers a threat to which other literary modes are not subject, the encroachment of mediocrity.

—George P. Elliott, *A Piece of Lettuce* (Random House), p. 248.

In this paragraph, it is perhaps easier to see the difference between the two kinds of addition—one by vertical structure and the other by horizontal structure. The first six sentences of this paragraph can easily be described by Christensen's Generative Rhetoric, but the last three can not. The seventh sentence, for example—what is its structural relation to the first six sentences? It is not subordinate to the sixth sentence. It is not subordinate to the third sentence, for if it were it would necessarily have the same relation to the third sentence that the fourth, fifth and sixth sentences have. It is not subordinate to the first sentence, for if it were it would necessarily be coordinate with both the second and third sentences. It is not coordinate with the first sentence. And yet the seventh sentence is clearly related structurally to the first sentence—for that matter, to the first six sentences as a unit. The relation is horizontal rather than vertical.

✦

Earlier, it was observed that the Generative Rhetoric discussed by Francis Christensen describes only vertical structures. This can also be observed to be true of the conventional outline; from one point of view, an outline in effect analyzes the structure of a whole essay in the same manner that the Generative Rhetoric referred to describes the structure of a paragraph—but with only the higher levels of structure described and probably with many of the major headings being the hovering-ghost variety or being more compact sentences than the ones appearing in the essay. The conventional method of outlining is not always applicable to all the essays that Freshman Composition students might be asked to read, nor is it applicable to all the essays these students or their instructors might wish to write. For an example any of the essays in Joseph Wood Krutch's *The Twelve Seasons* will serve; these essays are often reprinted in Freshman readers.

In *The Twelve Seasons,* there is carefully developed the relationship between

man and nature, first nature as animal life, then as plant life, and finally as nonliving nature, which is the first beginning in nature—or in the order of the book, the last. This development leads in the end to the statement that nature itself is an absolute and that the rhythms and cycles of nature are repeated in man's own consciousness. The phrase "Da Capo," appearing at the end of the twelfth essay, and meaning "go back to the beginning and repeat," sums up the theme of the whole book and points to the nearly perfect organic unity and order of this book.

The Twelve Seasons is a highly organized book, and yet neither the book as a whole nor any one of the twelve essays has the simple structure that begins with a generalization and then develops that generalization with increasingly specific supporting paragraphs and sentences. On the contrary, the essays and the book as a whole seem to grow and expand, becoming more general and more complete as they develop.

Essays like those of *The Twelve Seasons* are usually clearly constructed of sections or groups of several paragraphs. The three essays from which the three paragraphs quoted earlier come have this type of construction. Usually the first level of structure is indicated by punctuation, the spaces appearing between the paragraphs within each group. Sometimes, the sections are numbered as well; this is the case with the essays in Wallace Stevens' *The Necessary Angel.* The essay in *The Twelve Seasons* for November, "This Middle State," has three such sections, of eight, six, and nine paragraphs respectively. A brief outline listing the main headings, for the three sections of this essay, would look like this:

I While I am not too intolerant of the attitude of my friend who visited me from the city, I realize that we belong in two different, very significant categories: those who love best the world where man has successfully imposed himself upon nearly everything which is visible and those who love best the world of living nature—where nearly everything reminds me that I am part of something neither myself nor wholly subject to me.

/I These two types of men—nature lovers and nature haters—are alike in that, although they respond with different emotions, they both are emotionally aware of the vast world of the living but nonhuman, which does not concern man exclusively.

/I The proper response to this awareness is to find comfort in the fact that it is not man alone that participates in the Great Rebellion of the animate against the inanimate and to learn from nature what we are a part of and how we may participate in the whole.

Thus the largest structural units of this essay are arranged horizontally rather than vertically.

A similar horizontal structure is seen in the essays in Wallace Stevens' *The Necessary Angel.* In this work, the first essay, "The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words," deals with Stevens' definitions of the role of the poet and the nature of poetry. A "paragraph outline" of the introduction and sections one and two of this essay follows:

1 Plato's figure of the soul is a pair of winged horses—one noble and the other ignoble—and a charioteer, who when the soul is perfect traverses the whole heaven but when imperfect droops in flight and settles again to the ground.

/1 While our first response in identifying with this charioteer is to feel we

are traversing the whole heaven in his chariot, we then suddenly droop in flight and settle again to the solid ground.

SECTION ONE

1 The reason the figure loses its potency is not that it is unreal but rather that we are not free to yield ourselves to its unreality, as Plato was free to do.
  1 It is not unreality in general that we are not free to yield to but specifically the images of nobility in this figure—which become nobility itself, the idea of nobility.

/1 In the history of a figure, or of an idea (here the idea of nobility), there have been incessant changes of response; these changes have been psychological changes, and our own diffidence is simply one more state of mind due to such a change.
  1 The nature of this change is that the imagination loses its vitality when it adheres to what is unreal—the first effect being the maximum effect that it will ever have.
  2 The cause of this change is also that the imagination adheres to what is unreal, since the imagination has the strength of reality or none at all.

SECTION TWO

1 In following, in a very hasty way, the fortunes of the idea of nobility as a characteristic of the imagination, and even as its symbol or alter ego, through several of the episodes in its history, what its fate has been and what has determined its fate can be determined only on the basis of the relation between the imagination and reality.
  1 Verrocchio's statue in Venice of Bartolommeo Colleoni on a horse is a form of such nobility that it has never ceased to magnify us in our own eyes, a form in which the apposition between the imagination and reality is too favorable to the imagination.
  2 The nobility that had been for Verrocchio a thing of the imagination became for Cervantes in his Don Quixote a thing of reality, something that exists in life, something so true that it is in danger of ceasing to exist, if we isolate it, something in the mind of a precarious tenure.
  3 Clark Mill's statue in Washington of General Jackson riding a horse is a form in which there is not the slightest trace of the imagination (for it is a work of fancy) nor of reality (for it helps us to know ourselves only as we were, not as we are).
  4 A contemporary American artist's painting *Wooden Horses,* of a man, a woman, and two younger girls riding a merry-go-round, is a picture of ribald and hilarious reality, a picture wholly favorable to what is real and not without imagination.

In this much, it is evident that the structure of these first three sections as a whole is partly horizontal, partly vertical; the second section "predicates" the first, although the third is subordinate to the second. Moreover, within these first three sections, both vertical and horizontal structures are seen. The introductory section, brief though it is, has horizontal structure. Section one has both vertical and horizontal structure. Section two has vertical structure only. These three sections of the essay, in general, have structure in two dimensions, vertical and horizontal.

To outline the remaining sections of Stevens' essay would require much more space than will be required to indicate the horizontal structure of those sections of the essay by simply quoting the structural signals, or transition sentences, coming at the beginning of each section. At the beginning of section three, the following signal of structure appears in the first paragraph of that section:

> What I have said up to this point amounts to this: that the idea of nobility exists in art today only in degenerate forms or in a much diminished state, . . . that this is due to failure in the relation between the imagination and reality. I should like now to add that this failure is due, in turn, to the pressure of reality. (pp. 12-13)

The eleven paragraphs that follow deal with "the pressure of reality," as the cause of "The failure. . .," which is the subject presented in the first three sections of the essay; that is, this fourth section "predicates" the subject of the first three sections.

Section four of the essay begins with the statement: "Suppose we try, now, to construct the figure of a poet, a possible poet" (p. 23). This is done briefly in the next five paragraphs, in the terms of the preceding sections of the essay.

Similarly, section five opens with a transition sentence that is also a signal of structure:

> Here I am, well advanced in my paper, with everything of interest that I started out to say remaining to be said. I am interested in the nature of poetry and I have stated its nature, from one of the many points of view from which it is possible to state it. It is an interdependence of the imagination and reality as equals. This is not a definition, since it is incomplete. But it states the nature of poetry. (p. 27)

The signal could not be clearer that the structural relation between the first five sections of the essay, as a whole, and the remaining section is analogous to the relation between the subject and predicate in a sentence. The first five sections of the essay state the subject and the remaining section completes the author's statement about that subject.

The reason for looking at these organic essays as having structure in two dimensions rather than one might be summed up in this manner. When the basic rules and principles of exposition are presented to composition students, the qualification is sometimes stated, sometimes overlooked, that those principles are the simplest ones and are very often true, but that they are not necessarily the only principles and are not necessarily always true. The paragraphs and essays examined here may serve as a reminder that this qualification is worth pointing out to composition students.

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